

Grand Campaign – Der Weltkrieg – Centenary Game

GT88: 15 – 18 August 1915 (August 4)

General Situation

The good flying conditions of the late-summer meant that both sides on the Western Front were able to acquire excellent aerial photographs of the opposing trench systems. In this the Allies still had a distinct advantage in that they had the greater numbers of aircraft and in some respects better types as well.

The Germans were conscious of their inferiority in the air and with monthly regularity the German air staff contacted the manufacturers and demanded more and better planes. There is no doubt that the industry responded and quickly made improvements in their designs and increased their productivity. However, this was to no avail because the Allies were making similar efforts and up to this time they were able to maintain their lead in the air.

The Western Front



Figure 1: The British Sector of the Western Front, mid-August 1915.

It was a notable fact that by mid-August 1915, the British sector on the Western Front was still less than 100 kilometres long running from near Poperinge (5-3.0906) in Flanders to Beaumont (5-3.0809) in Artois. The British were therefore concentrated somewhat at the expense of their own ability to manoeuvre and also at the expense of the French who had to hold a much longer front.

Even Sir John French recognised there was something wrong in this and, on 17 August, a new British Army, the 4th was designated to hold the southern part of the British line. It was expected that this would also extend to the right and the British would start, albeit not instantly, to take over parts of the French line closer to the Somme. Sir Henry Rawlinson was to command this new force.

The Italian Front



Figure 2: The Po Valley, one of Europe's richest agricultural regions. This was a school wall map recovered from Sabbioneta (6-4.1924), published in Milan, Carta SPW (1913), "Where Our Food Comes From".

The rhythms of rural Italian life continued regardless of the war. In the Po Valley the harvest was in and there was a bit more leisure time. Village elders would crowd around newspapers and share the news given in letters from sons serving at the front. So far there had been little cause for widespread sorrow or for any great doubts about the conduct of the war. An increase in grain prices was welcome to farmers. The old folks still remembered the time when the Austrians ruled the land and if the war brought about the final steps of re-unification then nobody was disagreeing with that.

The Eastern Front

There was an outbreak of significant fighting on the eastern bank of the Zbrucz River in Podolia. The Russian 8th and 11th Armies had been moving up to this river in the last few days but on 15 August, the German Alpenkorps crossed the river at Skala (5-5.4611) and with aggressive action drove back the Russian 3rd Rifle and 16th Siberian Divisions which gave ground to avoid destruction.

Further north, in Eastern Volhynia there was some tension between the commanders of the German 12th Army and the Austro-Hungarian 1st and 4th Armies. The Germans had positioned themselves on the west bank of the Goryn River watching the Russians who were gathering in new strength on the far side. The Austrian commanders meanwhile were preparing defence lines to the rear and there was disagreement on the proper line of resistance. Conrad became involved and claimed that this sector was in the Austrian sphere of influence and the Germans should redeploy elsewhere. The first report of this caused Ludendorff to nearly choke on his breakfast on 16 August, his life being saved by the quick actions of his orderly, Heinrich Heimlich. A soon as Ludendorff could breathe again he dictated a sharp memorandum to the Austrian chief-of-staff and plainly declared that the Austrians

could not claim any exclusivity in that region and reminded his reader of the vital role played by the German troops in overrunning Rovno a few weeks previously. The 12th Army would, he stated, remain on the Goryn as long as the Kaiser wished them too. He then complained that the Austrian engineers in that region had been slow in repairing railroads and the matter would not be reconsidered until he saw signs of more efficiency in that respect.



Figure 3: The Russians are driven back from the Zbrucz River, 15 - 18 August 1915.

The Balkans

Nothing was going on. A study of Bulgarian soldiers' correspondence from this period records the universal assumption that the war in the Balkans was over.

The Near East

Hamilton had written on 17 August to London stating that he could not continue to attack without fresh troops. He pointed out that the French Corps at Cape Hellas was also very reluctant to attack again and without their assistance the campaign would fail. Unfortunately for Hamilton, the most effective military force heading in his direction was Lord Kitchener who would pass a very critical eye over what he would find.

Across the rest of the Near East there were few movements. Only Townsend in Iraq was going forward as he thrust the I Indian Corps up river from Ali Gharbi to Ab-Bazibab (7-9.4021), the "town

of flies". This move was not opposed by the Turks, but once again Townsend was stretching the logistical limits and the health of his force.

DM Summary – August 1915

Nation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Food Deficit	Month	Total	Morale
Germany	-	-	-	2				11	13	871	Good
Austria-Hungary	-	-	-	-				1	1	405	Good
Ottoman	-	1	-	-				-	1	40	Good
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-				-	-	12	Good
Central Powers	-	1	-	2				12	15	1308	
France	-	-	-	-				-	-	637	Good
Great Britain	-	-	-	-				-	-	124	Good
Russia	-	1	-	3				-	4	606	Shaken
Italy	-	-	-	-				-	-	17	Good
Belgium	-	-	-	-				-	-	(96)	NA
Serbia	-	-	-	-				-	-	(28)	NA
Entente	-	1	-	3				-	4	1381	

Player Notes

- CP: *East: Slowing down on the withdrawals to start forming a line along beneficial terrain features while the AH 3rd and 7th armies along the border running north from Czernowitz continue to build up. The German Sud Arme, supported by an AH infantry division, takes the opportunity to launch a strike against the Russian 8th Army's assembly areas north of the Dniester to disrupt their attempts to consolidate a new line.*
- Serbia: *No change.*
- West: *Nothing of note.*
- Caucasus: *The Turks start to entrench o their newly acquired gains NE of Erzerum whilst awaiting a fairly large inload of supplies. This supply concentration can now be moved rapidly along lateral lines and should allow me to conduct future offensive action at a point of my choosing.*
- Mesopotamia: *Quiet.*
- Palestine: *Quiet.*
- Gallipoli: *Quiet.*
- Italy: *Quiet.*

AP: This is my sixth consecutive turn without doing an attack anywhere. I will not complain that the Germans engaged the Russians because it may be easier to hit them when they are attacking compared to me having to find somewhere safe to attack (Safe? Who promised safety?) I did have to pause before spending supply in defence as the Russians are going to need every supply point for attack now.

Ivor noted recently that once lost air superiority is hard to win back. It is true that air superiority only moves in your favour on average one month in twelve. However, once you have air superiority you can only increase the advantage temporarily. The odds favour the side without superiority because any rolls they have in their favour will be permanent and there is also a small chance that the Superiority Level will shift immediately two Levels. This changes in 1918 when the Allies get modifiers in their favour. In this game so far, I have had the benefit of a single level of air superiority since May 1915 which has amounted to +1 drms in three attacks. That is likely to have given me 2 – 3 extra German DM so far.

Production Totals

Supply

Date	Ge	AH	Ot	Bul	CP	Fr	Br	Rus	Be	Se	It	Rom	Gr	US	Ent
Oct 14	77	18	-	-	95	20	18	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	58
Nov 14	77	18	-	-	95	20	18	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	58
Dec 14	77	18	2	-	97	20	18	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	58
Jan 15	77	26	2	-	105	30	18	20	-	-	-	-	-	10	78
Feb 15	77	26	2	-	105	30	18	20	-	-	-	-	-	10	78
Mar 15	77	26	2	-	105	30	18	20	-	-	-	-	-	10	78
Apr 15	77	26	2	-	105	30	18	20	-	-	-	-	-	10	78
May 15	77	26	2	1	106	30	18	20	-	-	-	-	-	10	78
Jun 15	77	26	2	1	106	30	18	18	-	-	10	-	-	10	86
Jul 15	77	26	2	1	106	30	18	18	-	-	10	-	-	10	86
Aug 15	77	26	2	1	106	30	18	14	-	-	10	-	-	10	82